

The Place and Importance of Cultural Values in the scope of Rural Tourism: Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival

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Abstract

One of the most important elements that constitute the tourism and touristic product is cultural values. In this study, the Yuruk Turkmen Festival traditionally organized every year in Düzeyn highland of Muğla province is considered. In the study, the place and importance of Yuruk Turkmen Festival which is one of the cultural values of Muğla and its region, has been discussed in the scope of rural tourism. The qualitative data collection method was used in the study preparation. In this context, data were gathered through interview, observation and document examination methods. The obtained data shows that even though Yuruk Turkmen Festival could not reach to national and international dimensions yet, participation has reached to thirty thousand people and also this participation is still on the locale scale and even though the ninth has been regulated, it shows that there has been significant contribution to the city. In addition, it can be said that such festivals have not only economic aspects but also it is an opportunity to promote the region and its culture. In this respect, it is possible that the Yuruk Turkmen Festival can be transformed into a source of income within the scope of rural tourism by bringing at first national and then international dimensions as possible and by presenting the cultural values in the tourism market.

Keywords: Rural tourism, Yuruk Turkmen Festival, Muğla

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, according to changing tourism demand the rural tourism has been developing rapidly. The rural tourism as a new type of tourism for tourists who want

to meet and know historical, natural beauty and cultural values in rural areas far from crowded places, it creates both economic and social development opportunities in the rural areas. Cultural tourism is realized by transferring language, traditions and customs through rural tourism [1]. From this point of view, it can be said that rural tourism has an important role in protecting both natural and cultural heritage as well as introducing this heritage to the external environment [2].

Rural tourism, which has various aspects such as camps built on farms, inter-nature activities, festivals and local entertainments, traditional and artistic performances, folk dances, etc., has a complementary and complementary support to the economy in the rural areas and also an increase in participation to local events [3].

Nowadays, rural tourism is a field of the fastest developing tourism industry in the world [4]. Soykan (2006) predicts that tourism activities in rural areas correspond to 10-20 percent of activities in all tourism areas [5]. Rural tourism triggers the development in rural areas and becomes a secondary source of income for those who have earned a living by agriculture in rural areas thanks to entrepreneurs in rural areas [6]. When it comes to rural tourism activities in Turkey, highland tourism first comes to mind. In this context, lowland villages apart from mountain and forest villages in Turkey have important advantages and potentialities in terms of both historical and sociocultural values [6].

Additionally, Soykan [2] expresses that the rural environment is an area where many activities based on open air can be made easily. It is also clear that the rural culture has many different activities and all of them are unique to their own regions. Therewith it is stated that the rural tourism will supply main authenticity to the tourists who now seek for localness in meals, music, entertainments and activities.

This study will introduce local and historical festivals which are held regularly every year for the last ten years, contributing to rural tourism by introducing local and cultural values at the national and international level.

HISTORICAL NOMADS

Throughout history Turks are a nation that is always on the move. This mobility has been achieved through constant pursuit with the aim of achieving better life conditions and obtaining places where they can do their best in animal husbandry. In addition, unfavorable nature conditions, the pressures of neighboring countries at sometimes and also limited economic resources within the borders of the country forced the Turks to become a travelling society and to migrate to different locations constantly [7].

The words of Oghuz-Turkmen-Yuruk have been used in the same sense throughout history. The word of 'Turkmen' has been used for the Turks who have met Muslim merchants then accepted and believed Islamic religion over time. In addition, Muslims from Oghuz are also called 'Turkmen'. Oghuz tribes came to Anatolia nomadically and they were scattered from Anatolia to other places. Some of them had settled down and engaged in agricultural affairs while others continued to live nomadically. They were called as 'Yuruk'. In other words, Yuruk and Turkmen names were given to Oghuzs who led a life nomadically in Anatolia and Rumelia and providing their livelihoods from animal husbandry and also lived in nomad tents they had built in the plains and flatlands according to the seasons [7].

Yuruk means walking people [8]. Yuruk is used for Turkish tribes living a nomadic life in Anatolia and Rumelia [9]. In the Ottoman Empire, Yuruk was described as 'non-land' namely non-resident and nomad [10]. The Yuruk word was used for Oghuz tribes who came from Central Asia to Anatolia and earning their livelihoods by doing livestock, also migrating to highlands in summers while migrating to coastal areas in winters [7].

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to discuss the place and the importance of Yuruk Turkmen Festival within the context of rural tourism which is traditionally organized every year in Düzeyn Highland of Muğla Province and also which is one of the cultural values of Muğla and its region. Numerous world-renowned festivals which are also part of the cultures of the world's societies are organized in the world. For instance, Oktoberfest in Germany, Bull Run or Bull Festival in Italy and Rio Carnival in Brazil are some of them. The aim of the study was to evaluate Yuruk Turkmen Festival, which is one of the cultural values of Muğla and its region, as a tourist product in the tourism market.

Qualitative data collection method was used as a method in the study. Qualitative research is a research method aiming at understanding the social phenomena, which is commonly used in the field of social sciences, human behaviors and what are the causes of these behaviors in a detailed and profound way [11]. Multiple data collection methods were used in the study and the obtained data were gathered by using interview, observation and document examination methods. The use of more than one data collection method in a research can provide both more detailed and more data and also they provide an opportunity to increase the validity and reliability of the research [12].

During the review of the document, promotional materials such as brochures, catalogues, web pages and social media printed for the nomads and Yuruk Turkmen Festivals were investigated. Semi-structured questionnaires were used in the interview method. In the method of observation, Yuruk Turkmen Festival was personally attended and on-site inspection was carried out.

FINDINGS

The Organizer of the Festival: Muğla Yuruk Association

Muğla is the city where is located in the southwestern corner of Turkey, within the boundaries of Aegean Region and Menteşe Region where the folds of Taurus intersect the fold of Western Anatolian. Muğla Yuruk Association was established at the center of Muğla in 2007. Three years after the foundation, Orhan Akcan has been the president of Muğla Yuruk Association since 2010.

Muğla Yuruk Association has organized regularly every year since it was established. The purpose of the association organizing these festivals is to introduce the Yuruk culture, to keep this historical and cultural value of Muğla region alive and also to create a cultural fusion with both domestic and foreign participation.

Despite the association has four hundred members, the festival has organized by fifteen members. Muğla Yuruk Association has been chosen as the 1st among the Yuruk Associations in Turkey thanks to these festivals they have organized since the foundation of the association.

Organized Dates of Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival

Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival was first realized on May in 2007 with the establishment of Muğla Yuruk Association. The festival has been held in May every year from 2007 to 2017 because this is the month of migration.

The reason why the festival is founded in Düzeyn Plateau is that this area is about two hundred acres and it is the most suitable place because there is a lot of participation and a large flat area is needed.

Throughout history migrations have been made in May hence this tradition has been desired to be kept alive. The reason for the migration in May is the change in seasonal and climatic conditions. In order to adapt to the weather conditions and to continue to their lives, Yuruks have migrated to cool places like highlands in summer periods and also have migrated to temperate areas like winter quarters in winter periods. The purpose of migration is to be peaceful and live together with the nature, to protect themselves and their animals from insects, and also by migrating different places to rest the land for next year in order to be able to be productive again owing to animal manures.

Performed Festivals (From 2007 to 2017)

First Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival was held in May, 2007 in the village of İkizce in Muğla. The Second Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival was held in again İkizce Village in 2008. Participation in these events was domestically and approximately 15 thousand people attended.

The Third Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival was held in 2009 but at that time due to increased participation it was held in Yılanlı Mountain. After that in sequence five festivals, including the third one, were held in Yılanlı Mountain.

The Eighth and Ninth Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festivals were held in Düzeyn Highland due to different reasons. Participation in these festivals reached approximately 40 thousand people. The Ninth Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival took two days unlike the others.

The Tenth Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival has been organized this year, was also held in Düzeyn Highland on 20th -21st of May 2017 and it was programmed for two days.

The festival was realized from the center of Muğla to Düzeyn Highland just like doing migration. The distance from the center of Muğla to the highland is 4km. The migration was realized by loading the nomad tents, blankets, articles which installed in the festival to horses and camels and then walking to the highland with a flourish of trumpets. At the same time, the municipality of Muğla also provided free transportation by bus for those wishing to participate to the festival.

Tents were set up in the festival for participants to sit and rest in the festival and also for the purpose of accommodation, participants were free to use.

Renting of animals such as camels, horses, mules used for festivals were covered by Muğla Yuruk Association. The area where the festivals made was free of charge. In this area, a large bazaar consisting of all kinds of traditional, rural, food, clothing and antiques was established. There was a certain amount of wages earned from the marketers; these revenues were used in the preparation of the festival.

On the evening of the festival, according to Yuruks' belief a big fire was burned and immigration was celebrated by singing songs, dancing and having fun all together.

The large bazaar was established in the festival area in order to attract the attention of tourists from all over the world. Thus the culture, foods and entertainment of Muğla region was introduced.

Various activities were also performed in the festival, some of them as below;

- Local folklore shows and games (such as, Zeybek and Kerimoğlu),
- Regional spoon dance by women with local clothes,
- Singers were brought from different regions both domestic and abroad, and they sung the folk songs.

In addition, a real regional wedding was held at the

Ninth and also Tenth of Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival. A traditional henna night was arranged. The wedding was held with all attendees and participants of festival. Moreover in the festival, a myth was desired to share with participants by enacting, this myth was the baby of the Yuruk agha was taken away by an eagle in the history.

The Tenth of Muğla Yuruk Turkmen Festival took two days, Saturday and Sunday on 20th -21st of May, 2017. Approximately 50 thousand people participated in the festival. Along with from 54 domestic cities participation, there were also participants from Azerbaijan, Iraq and Syrian Turkmen and the Balkans from abroad. About 50 tents were set up in the festival for those who want to stay at night in these tents. Orhan Akcan, who is the president of Mugla Yuruk Association, said that "The cost of the festival was about 200 thousand and the budget was met by the association. The income of association has been funded by donations made".

A photographic exhibition was presented with the panel on Saturday, 20th of May. Panelists from Kirghizia, Yakutia, Khakassia and Muğla University talked about the ancient Turkish world. In addition, singers from Iranian Tabriz, Crimea and Azerbaijan participated in the festival. Furthermore, folk dance shows and greased wrestling were realized in the festival. On Sunday, 21st of May, the festival was concluded with local celebrations and entertainment by doing a real regional wedding and a local henna night.

CONCLUSION

Today, tourism has become one of the most important income-generating sectors in the world. One of them is festivals within the scope of event tourism. A lot of festivals, are being organized especially in European countries, reflect the cultural values of the region that are world-renowned and visited by many tourists. These events and festivals can be an important source of income for certain regions and countries where they are organized at particular periods.

The Yuruk Turkmen Festival, which is traditionally organized every year in Muğla and is also one of the cultural values of Muğla and its region, can be transformed into touristic products and so a source of income by promoting at first in Turkey as nationally with more intensive publicity activities and later on as internationally in the long term.

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